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ABSTRACT

A study in Illinois was designed to assess the extent of private sector involvement in secondary vocational education and what segments of the private sector were being involved. Information was gathered through a survey that was mailed to directors of secondary and state agency regional delivery systems and community college deans. Of the 61 regional delivery systems, 55 (90 percent) returned the questionnaire; of the 49 community college deans, 39 (80 percent) returned the questionnaire. Findings were reported separately for the two populations. Some of the conclusions of the study were the following: (1) private sector participation with vocational education can benefit both education and the private sector; (2) education for employment most frequently involves the private sector in activities such as providing opportunities for faculty to update their work skills, verifying occupational task lists, providing work sites for students, and advising programs through advisory councils; (3) the vocational education community sees the private sector as having the most difficulty in helping it to address the needs of target populations and in addressing statewide education and training needs; and (4) the education community does not communicate well with the private sector. The study recommended requiring increased involvement of the private sector at all levels of vocational education. (KC)

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Private Sector Involvement in Vocational Education

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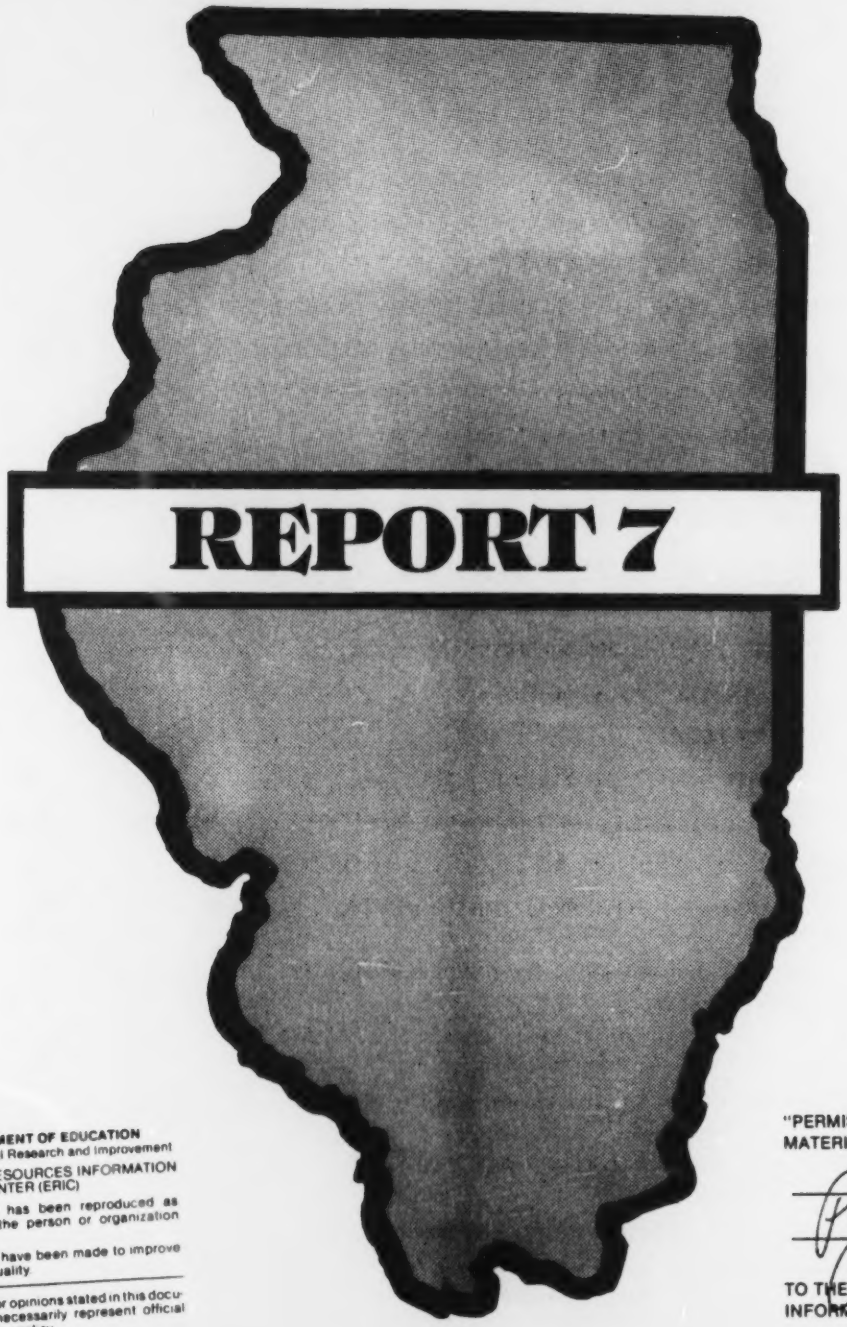

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ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
1987-1988

This report is one in a series of 25 technical reports prepared to fulfill mandates of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, 1984.

CE 056 952

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1987-1988

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Report 6 EVALUATING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

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(A Survey Report)

Report 21 REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS: OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS (A Survey Report)

Report 22 EFFECTS OF THE ICoVE 1986-87 STUDY OF THE COORDINATION OF JTPA AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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TO: Governor James R. Thompson
Lauro Cavazos, Secretary of Education
Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Labor
Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois Job Training Coordinating Council

Purpose: To evaluate the involvement of the private sector in vocational education per the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984.

This report draws heavily from the survey conducted by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICoVE) and public hearings. ICoVE also applied its own assessment from recent national studies and reports concerning needs of the workforce, as perceived by the private sector. The information compiled clearly demonstrates that the private sector, if informed, is ready and willing to become involved in education for employment. Partnership--it is beneficial to both groups.

It is the consensus of the Council that the suggested actions be accepted and acted upon as a whole to strengthen the partnership between education for employment and the private sector, resulting in employable students.

Enclosed are the findings, and suggested actions from the Illinois Council on Vocational Education.

Sincerely,

Ronald Borelli

Investing in People

An Equal Opportunity Employer

REPORT 7

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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PREFACE

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 gave the Illinois Council on Vocational Education four responsibilities pertaining to assessment of private sector - vocational education partnerships. This report addresses three of those responsibilities. (The fourth responsibility is reported in ICoVE Report #3, Advice to the Private Sector.)

The first mandate states:

> ***Recommend procedures to the State board to ensure and enhance the participation of the public in the provision of vocational education at the local level within the State, particularly the participation of local employers and local labor organizations. [Section 112 (d) (7)]***

The second mandate pertaining to private sector involvement asks the council to make recommendations to the State board concerning emphasis on the use of business concerns and labor organizations in conducting vocational education. Specifically the mandate states:

> ***Submit recommendations to the State board on the conduct of vocational education programs conducted in the State which emphasize the use of business concerns and labor organizations. [Section 112 (d) (5)]***

The third mandate requires the State Council to "evaluate the vocational education delivery systems assisted under this Act [Perkins], in terms of its adequacy and effectiveness in achieving the purposes of the Act." The purpose referring to private sector involvement which is the second focus of this report states:

> ***Promote greater cooperation between public agencies and the private sector in preparing individuals for employment in promoting the quality of vocational education in the States, and in making the vocational system more responsive to the labor market in the States. [Section 2 (3)]***

The Act requires the Illinois Council to "recommend procedures to the State board" and further requires the Council to "advise the Governor, the State board, the State job training coordinating council, the Secretary [of Education] and the Secretary of Labor of these findings and recommendations."

In assessing the extent to which the vocational education community and the private sector work cooperatively to prepare people for employment, to enhance the quality of vocational education, and to make vocational education

more responsive to the State's labor market, ICoVE conducted a survey. The survey inquired about cooperative activities, the value of those activities, the impact of the Education for Employment Policy on partnerships, and characteristics of private-sector representation.

This report draws heavily from that survey for assessment. In addition, it uses information gleened from other ICoVE studies and public hearings. In preparing its recommendations, ICoVE applied its own assessment to recent national studies and reports concerning needs of the workforce as perceived by the private sector. Selected excerpts from those studies are incorporated into this report.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

An ICoVE questionnaire, Private-Sector Involvement in Vocational Education, was mailed to directors of the secondary and state agency regional delivery systems and community college deans. Of the 61 regional delivery systems, 55 or 90% returned the questionnaire. Of the 49 community college deans, 39 or 80% returned the questionnaire. In total, 110 questionnaires were mailed, 94 or 85% were returned.

The questionnaire was constructed to include a "don't know/no response" for several items in which a continuum was used for responses. In tabulating percentages of responses to the continuum, ICoVE used the total number of responses to the item, minus the "don't know/no response" responses. Therefore, all percentages cited in this report reflect the percentage of those giving a response on the continuum. The percentages showing how many indicated "don't know/no response" reflects the percentage of all who responded to the item. It does not include items left blank, but rather those consciously marked "don't know/no response."

Several questionnaire items used were designed by the National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education (NASCOVE). NASCOVE is attempting to collect compatible data from all state councils on several topics of national interest. The data will provide information for input to reauthorization. On behalf of the National Association, the Illinois Council thanks the regional delivery system directors and community college deans for their excellent response to the questionnaire.

ACRONYMS

CEO = Chief Executive Officer
EFE = Education for Employment
HITS = High Impact Training Services
ICCB = Illinois Community College Board
ICoVE = Illinois Council on Vocational Education
IDES = Illinois Department of Employment Security
IJTCC = Illinois Job Training Coordinating Council
IOICC = Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
ISBE = Illinois State Board of Education
LMI = Labor Market Information
QAP = Quality Assistance Program
RDS = Regional Delivery System
VIP = Vocational Instructional Practicum (internship)

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education's involvement with the private sector has a long history, but never has it been so vital to quality programming as since the age of high technology. Rapid advancements in technology have resulted in workplace changes at astronomical rates. In order to educate and prepare students for successful entry and tenure in the workforce of today and the future, both education and the private sector must be intricately involved.

The Perkins Act, like the State Board's Education for Employment Policy, clearly charges vocational education with being responsive to the present and future needs of the workforce. Occupational skills acquired through vocational education must be marketable. Whether the private sector's role is advisory or one of sharing in instruction, it is a key factor in providing quality vocational education capable of preparing and maintaining a quality workforce.

In recent years, the private sector has been quite vocal regarding its concern for the quality of education. The private sector has communicated that not only have the needed occupational skills and skill levels changed, but that communication, computation, scientific thinking, interpersonal skills, attitudinal skills, and a host of other needed skills have also changed.

Without knowledge of workforce needs, the educational community cannot prepare workers with skills that are marketable and the gap between the skills workers have and the skills workers need will widen. In an effort to reduce their own in-house training and re-training costs, the private sector is willing to work with education to help prepare a workforce that is work-ready.

In its survey about private-sector involvement in vocational education, ICoVE found that when the private sector is involved in vocational education activities, their contribution is viewed by educators as being valuable. Throughout the State, this involvement is expanding, with increasing numbers of partnerships being formed between education and the private sector.

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WITH REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM PROGRAMS

Prior to adoption of ISBE's Education for Employment (EFE) Policy and administrative plan, local vocational education programs at the secondary level were generally planned by individual high schools or, in the case of larger districts, several high schools. Area vocational centers provided programs which served several high schools in the area. Individual programs and institutions were encouraged to have advisory councils or committees. Some did; some did not.

As secondary districts began to reorganize, forming the new secondary regional delivery systems for vocational education, the State Board urged regional-level advisory councils. As part of the transition or revitalization initiative inherent in the EFE policy, the process for curricular revisions required private-sector involvement. During this time period, the use of advisory councils, as had been most familiar to vocational education waned. Private-sector involvement had changed its format.

National attention to private-sector involvement in the total educational process caused some firms to take the initiative and make initial contacts with the schools. From this, formats such as the "adopt-a-school" program emerged.

ICoVE's study of private-sector involvement in vocational education was designed to assess the extent of private-sector involvement and what segments of the private sector were being involved. The Council was more interested in assessing what involvement was occurring than the structure or format used. Findings are reported in the sections which follow.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The regional delivery systems have the greatest private-sector involvement in the task list verification process designed to revitalize vocational education curriculum. (See Table 1.) This finding was not surprising to ICoVE. At public hearings conducted by ICoVE earlier in the year, the Council heard many presentations about the extensive private-sector involvement in this activity. Those testifying believed private-sector involvement had benefited not only the curriculum effort, but had helped teachers to better understand workforce needs in general.

The RDS directors also cited that opportunities for faculty to update work skills through activities such as the VIP (internship) program had provided for a large amount of private-sector involvement. Nearly 90% cited "significant/moderate" private-sector involvement as advisory council members.

Helping to meet the unique needs of vocational education and providing work sites for students were additional responses for significant/moderate involvement indicated by four out of five respondents.

Private-sector involvement in activities resulting in business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities were limited at the secondary level. Less than 30% reported significant or moderate involvement. Only one-third of the private-sector involvement with secondary programs indicated moderate to significant activities to promote vocational education with local boards of control or parents.

TABLE 1

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Question:	To what extent has vocational education involved the private sector in the improvement and expansion of its programs? 3 = significant; 2 = moderate; 1 = little; 0 = none; N = don't know/no response

Rank order of "significant/moderate" rating

	Outcomes of Private-Sector Activities
95%	Work with task list verification process
92%	Opportunities for faculty to update work skills, such as VIP
87%	Provide work sites for students, such as cooperative education
87%	Participate on program or regional advisory council
81%	Meet unique needs of vocational education
67%	Meet specific work place requirements
64%	Participate in class instruction, demonstration
60%	Address statewide education and training needs
51%	Provide hands-on to students in work place for instruction
49%	Address unique needs of targeted populations
34%	Promote vocational education to local board of control, parents, etc.
28%	Business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities
8%	Don't know/no response

Private-sector involvement for the purpose of addressing needs of target populations was reported as moderate to significant by about half of the RDS directors. The other half indicated it was "little to none."

Helping vocational education meet workplace requirements and participating in class instruction and providing demonstrations occurred to a moderate or

significant extent in about two-thirds of the RDS through private-sector involvement.

Ratings given by RDS directors for the private-sector involvement in generating outcomes for the twelve activities listed on the ICoVE questionnaire (Table 1) were compiled. Of the total, 32% of the private-sector involvement in the 12 activities were rated as "significant"; 35% as "moderate"; 20% as "very little"; and 13% as "none". Eight percent of all ratings given by the directors indicated "don't know or no response."

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In addition to asking about the involvement level of the private sector, ICoVE asked about the contribution which resulted from this involvement. As expected, RDS directors believe the greatest contributions by the private sector are their contributions to the task list verification effort and opportunities for faculty to update work skills (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

PRIVATE-SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

Question:	To what extent has the involvement of the private sector contributed to the improvement and expansion of its programs? 3 = significant; 2 = moderate; 1 = very little; 0 = none; N = don't know/no response

88%	Opportunities for faculty to update work skills, such as VIP
88%	Work with task list verification process
85%	Provide work sites for students, such as cooperative education
80%	Participate on program or regional advisory council
67%	Participate in class instruction, demonstration
66%	Meet specific work place requirements
63%	Meet unique needs of vocational education
58%	Provide hands-on to students in work place for instruction
48%	Address unique needs of targeted populations
47%	Address statewide education and training needs
34%	Promote vocational education to local board of control, parents, etc.
25%	Business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities
9%	Don't know/no response

In reviewing individual questionnaire responses, ICoVE found that 7% of the response ratings indicated that the contributions of the private sector to a

specific activity were lower than the involvement-level ratings. (Seven percent represents 48 ratings out of 645 total responses.) A close look revealed that all but 2% of these lower ratings were given by five RDS directors. This may suggest problems with the private sector - vocational education partnership in five RDSs.

Most of the activities in which the contribution rating was lower than the rating given to the level of involvement included meeting specific workplace requirements, addressing unique needs of targeted populations, and working with the task list verification process.

ICoVE found that 6% of the response ratings indicated that the contribution was greater than the involvement. No concentration of those higher ratings occurred. Most were related to providing work sites for students, opportunities for faculty to update work skills, and meeting the unique needs of vocational education.

BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT

When asked to identify barriers to private-sector involvement from a list of 12 possible barriers, the regional delivery system directors selected an average of 3.8 barriers. A complete listing of responses is found in Table 3.

Over half of the regional directors indicated that the private sector's lack of awareness concerning how they could help or why their help is needed is a barrier to their involvement. This may suggest that vocational education needs to increase efforts to make their need for partnerships known. About one-fourth of the responses indicated that the private sector's hesitancy to volunteer is a barrier. One-fourth also indicated the private sector doesn't think it is their responsibility, and one-fourth indicated they aren't involved because they have not been asked.

Insufficient staff time to work with the private sector was identified as the greatest barrier to their involvement. Nearly six out of ten directors indicated this as a barrier.

About one of every five RDS directors suggested that prior private-sector experiences with vocational education had created barriers for current involvement. These included lack of private-sector benefits, disappointments with previous efforts and that the private sector hadn't been asked to do important things.

Staff hesitancy to get involved with the private sector was indicated as a barrier by 14% of the directors. In a study conducted by ICoVE in 1985, staff's hesitancy was considerably greater. ICoVE's previous study found that staff felt inadequate in working with the private sector. They lacked self-confidence and indicated they didn't know how to approach the private sector or what direction a partnership should take. Many felt threatened.

TABLE 3

BARRIERS TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Question:	What are the barriers to private-sector involvement? Check all that apply. (Twelve possible barriers were listed.) Average number of barriers identified: 3.8

58%	Insufficient staff time to work with them.
55%	Don't realize how they could help.
51%	Unaware of needed involvement.
38%	Don't have time.
24%	Don't think it's their responsibility.
24%	Never been asked.
24%	Hesitant to volunteer.
20%	Hasn't benefited them in the past.
18%	Have been disappointed in previous efforts.
17%	Not asked to do important things.
14%	Staff hesitant to get involved.
13%*	Additional reasons given by respondents, see below.
4%	Not interested in vocational education.

*Other reasons cited by respondents include:
- Many businesses are small and have few personnel to assist.
- Everyone is busy.
- Meeting expenses.
- Limited supply of private sector in rural settings.

This improvement in staff's willingness to become involved may be attributed in part to their involvement with the private sector in the task list verification process and the VIP (internship) program. Efforts to provide in-service education to teachers pertaining to working with the private sector may be an additional factor.

NUMBER OF PRIVATE-SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED

The number of private-sector representatives involved in the regional delivery system activities varied among the regions, ranging from three to over 1,000. ICoVE asked each director how many private-sector representatives had been involved in the regional delivery system during its development years. The average of all responses to the question was 235. Percentages by groupings revealed:

23% had 3-50 private-sector representatives involved
19% had 51-100 private-sector representatives involved
10% had 101-199 private-sector representatives involved
17% had 200-299 private-sector representatives involved
15% had 300-399 private-sector representatives involved
10% had 400-500 private-sector representatives involved
6% had over 1,000 private-sector representatives involved

KINDS OF WORKERS INVOLVED

ICoVE asked the regional delivery system directors to identify the kinds of workers from the private sector who were involved with vocational education in the region. In addition, directors were asked the extent of that involvement. (See Table 4.)

The secondary vocational education delivery system has the most private sector involvement from the owners of small businesses. Historically, vocational education graduates find first employment in small businesses. Smaller businesses, which usually do not have training departments, rely more heavily on programs such as vocational education to provide a pool of workers.

TABLE 4

OCCUPATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Question:	What kind of workers from the private sector become involved in vocational education? Level of involvement: 4 = extensive; 3 = moderate; 2 = some; 1 = little; 0 = none; 21% don't know/ no response

Extensive or Moderate Involvement

67%	Owners of small businesses	28%	Clerical personnel
49%	Managers, VPs	26%	Sales Representatives
49%	Supervisors	23%	CEOs of small businesses
41%	Professional personnel	21%	Laborers, non-union
33%	Technicians	20%	Organized labor
30%	Farmers	13%	CEOs of large businesses

Some or Little Involvement

68%	CEOs of small businesses	48%	Sales representatives
59%	CEOs of large businesses	47%	Farmers
59%	Clerical	42%	Supervisors
56%	Technicians	42%	Managers, VPs
52%	Organized labor	41%	Professional personnel
50%	Laborers, non-union	31%	Owners of small businesses

No Involvement

29%	Organized Labor	13%	Clerical
29%	Laborers, non-union	11%	Technicians
27%	CEOs of large businesses	10%	CEOs of small businesses
26%	Sales representatives	9%	Managers, VPs
23%	Farmers	9%	Supervisors
18%	Professional personnel	2%	Owners of small businesses

Supervisory and manager/vice president level personnel comprised the second ranking involvement from the private sector. Nearly half of the directors reported moderate to extensive involvement by these groups.

The group of workers least involved in vocational education were those representing labor, both organized and non-union. Nearly 30% of the RDSs reported no involvement of these groups. Half said the groups were involved "some" or "little" and one out of five RDSs indicated labor involvement that was "moderate" or "extensive."

In a 1986 study conducted by ICoVE, local vocational educators indicated that labor made the most significant contribution when working directly at the program level, i.e. with teachers/instructors assisting with instruction or assessing program content.

CEOs of large businesses were reported as being only slightly more involved than labor. The small number of large businesses throughout the State may be the reason. Large businesses may be represented by the group of managers and supervisors although based on the average profile of private sector-involvement, only 15% represent a workplace over 500. (See Table 7.)

Written comments indicated additional involvement from "middle" management personnel. Worker groups such as technicians, professional personnel, farmers, sales representatives and clerical personnel tended to be most involved in the "some" to "moderate" range. Table 5 further depicts the extent of involvement by various groups.

TABLE 5

LIKELIHOOD OF OCCUPATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Question:	What kind of workers from the private sector become involved in vocational education? Level of involvement: 4 = extensive; 3 = moderate; 2 = some; 1 = little; 0 = none; N = don/t know/no response

Most frequent extensive involvement	Least frequent extensive involvement
Owners of small businesses Managers, VPs	Clerical Sales Representatives
Most frequent moderate involvement	**Least frequent moderate involvement**
Owners of small businesses Supervisors Managers, VPs Professional personnel	CEOs of large businesses Organized labor
Most frequent some involvement	**Least frequent some involvement**
CEOs of small businesses Clerical Technicians Managers, VPs	Organized labor Laborers, non-union
Most frequent little involvement	**Least frequent little involvement**
Organized labor CEOs of large businesses Laborers, non-union	Owners of small businesses Managers, VPs

(cont'd)

Table 5 (cont'd)

Most frequent no involvement	Least frequent no involvement
Organized labor	Owners of small businesses
Laborers, non-union	Supervisors
Sales representatives	Managers, VPs

TYPES OF INDUSTRY

As Illinois industries shifted from manufacturing-based to service-based, vocational education programs have also shifted. The shifting of all industries has created new and different needs. Declining industries have often been in need of retraining, whereas growing industries have needed more initial training programs.

TABLE 6

REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRY

Question:	Do private-sector representatives involved with your programs represent the industries in your geographical area in an appropriate ratio? Scale: greater, about the same, less, not involved, 19% don't know/ no response

RANK ORDER

GREATER

33% Health Services
27% Retail Trades
24% Manufacturing
24% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
20% Construction Trades
16% Agriculture
15% Repair Services
15% Social Services, e.g., child care, family serv.
11% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
7% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
7% Gov't, incl. postal & military
5% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping

LESS

31% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
27% Gov't., incl. postal & military
24% Construction Trades
24% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
24% Agriculture
22% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
20% Social Services, e.g. child care, family serv.
18% Repair Services

ABOUT THE SAME

49% Repair Services
45% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
42% Manufacturing
42% Retail Trades
40% Social Services, child care, family serv.
38% Financial, Insurance, Real Estate
36% Construction Trades
35% Health Services
35% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
33% Agriculture
33% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
29% Gov't, incl. postal & military

NO INVOLVEMENT

15% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
13% Gov't., incl. postal & military
9% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
7% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
5% Agriculture
4% Construction Trades
4% Transportation, Communication, Utilities

(cont'd)

Table 6 (cont'd)

LESS		NO INVOLVEMENT	
15%	Hospitality, e.g. lodging, food	2%	Manufacturing
15%	Retail Trade	2%	Repair Services
15%	Manufacturing	2%	Health Services
13%	Health Services	0%	Retail Trades

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ALL RESPONSES

21%	Greater	7%	No involvement
47%	About the same	19%	Don't know/no response
25%	Less		

Educational delivery systems, particularly the regional systems are encouraged to involve numbers of the private sector who are representative of the industrial as well as a demographic mix of the geographic area. Regional directors were asked to assess the representation of various industries in proportion to their presence in the region. Table 6 shows some of the findings.

The five industries most often involved with vocational education to an extent greater than they exist in the geographic area include four rapidly growing industries, i.e., health, retail trade, hospitality, and construction trades. The fifth, manufacturing, is an industry undergoing extensive change.

Overall, one-half of the representation is believed to be in proportion to the industrial presence in the geographic area being served. About 1/5 is believed to be overrepresented, and about 1/4 is believed to be underrepresented.

One out of 12 industries is listed as not being represented in 2/3 of the regions. Some regions may not have all 12 industries represented in the area; many do not have programs preparing students for work in all of the industries.

The mix of industries involved in vocational education is representative. Some minor adjustments may provide improvement, but overall, it appears RDSs are receiving input from the various industries in the geographic area.

SIZE OF WORKPLACES HAVING REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

One-third of the private-sector representatives involved with vocational education programs are from a workplace with less than 10 employees; 59% have less than 100 employees. Nearly-three fourths of the private sector representatives are from a workplace having less than 250 employees. (See Table 7.)

The input being received in the RDS represents the size of workplace where most vocational education students will find initial employment. These individuals also represent workplaces which generally are not large enough to have their own training staff.

TABLE 7

WORKPLACE SIZE

Question:	What size of workplace do people who become involved in your programs represent?

Average Percent Involved	Workplace Size
32%	Under 10 employees
27%	10-100 employees
15%	Over 500 employees
14%	100-250 employees
13%	250-500 employees

EFFECT OF EFE ON PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WITH SECONDARY PROGRAMS

Three-fourths of the RDS directors report that the EFE policy has increased partnerships between the private sector and vocational education. One out of five believe partnerships have remained about the same and less than 5% believe partnerships have decreased. (See Table 8.)

TABLE 8

EFFECT OF EFE ON PARTNERSHIPS

Question:	How has the Education for Employment Policy affected partnerships between the private sector and vocational education?

	Regional Delivery System
Increased significantly	24%
Increased some	51%
About the same	20%
Decreased some	4%
Decreased significantly	0%

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Community college districts throughout the State have had a wide and varied range of private-sector participation in their occupational programs for several years. The EFE Policy and administrative plan adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education identified the existing community college system as the delivery system for community college programs.

Because the districts served by community colleges did not change, existing partnerships between community colleges and the private sector were not disrupted. The partnerships have been able to continue ongoing initiatives, and provide a well-established resource for new initiatives of the Policy.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Nearly all (92%) of the community college deans reported that private-sector involvement was "significant" or "moderate" in providing opportunities for faculty to update work skills and in their participation on advisory councils. The deans also reported "significant" to "moderate" involvement of the private sector in providing work sites for student and in working with the task list verification processes. (See Table 9.)

For all of the activities listed, nearly half of the deans reported that private-sector involvement was "moderate" or "significant." Private-sector involvement with community colleges is more extensive in foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities than in the secondary RDSs.

Both the secondary programs and the community colleges rated private-sector involvement related to addressing the unique needs of targeted populations as one of the lower levels of involvement.

Helping vocational education meet workplace requirements occurred in a "moderate" to "significant" extent in 72% of the community colleges. Hands-on experience in the workplace was reported as being provided from "moderately" to "significantly" by 68% of the deans.

Over half of the deans reported that private-sector involvement in classroom instruction through special presentations or demonstrations was "moderate" to "significant."

Ratings given by all of the deans responding to ICoVE's survey in generating outcomes for the 12 activities listed on the questionnaire were compiled (see Table 9). Of the total, 26% of the private-sector involvement in the 12 activities was rated as "significant"; 43% as "moderate"; 26% as "very little";

and 4% as "none". Four percent of all the ratings given by the deans indicated "don't know/no response."

TABLE 9

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Question:	To what extent has vocational education involved the private sector in the improvement and expansion of its programs? 3 = significant; 2 = moderate; 1 = very little; 0 = none; N = don't know/no response

Rank order of "significant/moderate" rating

Outcomes of Private-Sector Activities

92% Opportunities for faculty to update work skills, such as VIP

92% Participate on program or regional advisory council

88% Work with task list verification process

87% Provide work sites for students, such as cooperative education

81% Meet unique needs of vocational education

72% Meet specific work place requirements

68% Provide hands-on to students in work place for instruction

64% Address statewide education and training needs

52% Participate in class instruction; demonstration

51% Business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities

49% Address unique needs of targeted populations

45% Promote vocational education to local board of control, parents, etc.

5% Don't know/no response

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In addition to asking about the level of involvement of the private sector, ICoVE asked community college deans to rate the contributions resulting from the various activities in which the private sector was involved. The deans cited the opportunities for faculty to update work experience resulting from private-sector involvement as the greatest contribution (see Table 10.) Work sites for students and participation on advisory councils were the activities profiting second most. These were followed closely by efforts in the task list verification process, meeting unique needs of vocational education, and meeting specific workplace needs.

In comparing questionnaire responses concerning the level of private-sector involvement and the contribution resulting from that involvement, 7% of all

TABLE 10

PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

Question:	To what extent has the involvement of the private sector contributed to the improvement and expansion of its programs? 3 = significant; 2 = moderate; 1 = very little; 0 = none; N= don't know/no response

88% Opportunities for faculty to update work skills, such as VIP

84% Provide work sites for students, such as cooperative education

84% Participate on program or regional advisory council

82% Work with task list verification process

75% Meet unique needs of vocational education

72% Meet specific work place requirements

67% Provide hands-on to students in work place for instruction

61% Business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities

59% Address statewide education and training needs

55% Address unique needs of targeted populations

52% Participate in class instruction, demonstration

45% Promote vocational education to local board of control, parents, etc.

5% Don't know/no response

the responses indicated that the rating for the contribution was greater than the rating given to the level of involvement. Most improved ratings were for providing opportunities for faculty to update their skills, providing hands-on for students in the workplace, and foundations or other equipment, fund raising activities.

Fifteen percent of the rates indicated the contribution to be of less significance than the level of involvement. The activities most often receiving this lower rating included the task list verification process, addressing unique needs of targeted populations, addressing statewide needs, and providing work sites for students.

BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT

The community college deans selected an average of 4.1 barriers (from a list of 12 possible) when asked to identify barriers to private-sector involvement. The most common barriers identified were the lack of awareness pertaining to needed involvement and the fact that many don't realize how they can help.

TABLE 11

BARRIERS TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Question:	What are the barriers to private-sector involvement? Check all that apply. (Twelve possible barriers were listed.) Average number of barriers identified: 4.1

62%	Unaware of needed involvement
59%	Don't realize how they could help
50%	Insufficient staff time to work with them
39%	Hesitant to volunteer
34%	Don't have time
29%	Have been disappointed in previous efforts
26%	Staff hesitant to get involved
26%	Not asked to do important things
24%	Never been asked
23%	Don't think it's their responsibility
21%	Hasn't benefitted them in the past
11%	Not interested in vocational education
3%*	Additional reasons given by respondents, see below

*Other reasons cited by respondents include:
•Lack of knowledge regarding educational needs
•Limited supply of private sector in rural settings

Half of the community college deans said that insufficient staff time to work with the private sector was a barrier and one-third said lack of time on the part of the private sector presented barriers. Three options citing poor previous experiences, not asking the representatives to do important things, and the lack of benefits to the private sector when they are involved were each seen as barriers by 20-30% of the deans.

About one-fourth of the deans indicated they believed the private sector didn't think it was their responsibility and that they hadn't been asked. Nearly 40% noted that the private sector is hesitant to volunteer.

Over one-fourth of the deans responded that staff hesitancy to get involved is a barrier. This may suggest a need for in-service education of staff to alleviate concerns.

NUMBER OF PRIVATE-SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED

The number of private-sector representatives reported as involved with occupational education programs in community colleges varied, ranging from five to over 1,000. The average participation per community college is 419. Percentages by groupings showed:

22% had 5-100 private-sector representatives involved
40% had 200-399 private-sector representatives involved

26% had 400-700 private-sector representatives involved
13% had over 1,000 private-sector representatives involved

KINDS OF WORKERS INVOLVED

The community college deans reported that supervisors and managers/vice presidents make up the largest percentages of the private-sector involvement. Owners and CEOs of small businesses are also heavily involved. Private-sector involvement with community college programs from professional personnel and technicians is also substantial. (See Table 12.) Community colleges offer large portions of their programs in nursing and allied health fields, as well as a variety of technical programs which prepare technicians for numerous occupational areas.

Least represented in the community college programs are representatives of farmers and laborers, both organized and non-union labor. Labor has "some" or "little" involvement in about 60% of the community college programs.

Sales representatives and clerical personnel appear to have marginal participation in community colleges. CEOs of large businesses are fairly well involved when viewed as their proportionate share of the private sector.

TABLE 12

OCCUPATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Question:	What kind of workers from the private sector become involved in vocational education? Level of involvement: 4 = extensive; 3 = moderate; 2 = some; 1 = little; 0 = none; 9% don't know/no response

Extensive or Moderate Involvement

68%	Supervisors	35%	CEOs of large businesses
63%	Managers, VPs	27%	Farmers
56%	Owners of small businesses	24%	Sales representatives
49%	Professional personnel	22%	Laborers, non-union
47%	CEOs of small businesses	21%	Organized labor
42%	Technicians	20%	Clerical

Some or Little Involvement

69%	Clerical	52%	Technicians
64%	Organized Labor	48%	Farmers
64%	Sales representatives	46%	Professional personnel
58%	Laborers, non-union	45%	Owners of small businesses
55%	CEOs of large businesses	34%	Managers, VPs
53%	CEOs of small businesses	33%	Supervisors

No Involvement

24%	Farmers	6%	Technicians
19%	Laborers, non-union	5%	Professional personnel
14%	Organized labor	3%	Managers, VPs
12%	Sales representatives	0%	Owners of small businesses
11%	Clerical	0%	CEOs of small business
9%	CEOs of large businesses	0%	Supervisors

Table 13 shows the extent of involvement of various groups. The owners of small businesses, supervisors, and CEOs of small businesses were the only groups that all community college deans reported as involved.

TABLE 13

OCCUPATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Question:	What kind of workers from the private sector become involved in vocational education? Level of involvement: 4 = extensive, 3 = moderate, 2 = some, 1 = little, 0 = none

Most frequent extensive involvement	Least frequent extensive involvement
Owners of small businesses Technicians Managers, VPs	Sales Representatives CEOs of large businesses Laborers, non-union CEOs of small businesses Farmers
Most frequent moderate involvement	**Least frequent moderate involvement**
CEOs of small businesses Supervisors Managers, VPs Professional personnel Technicians	Clerical Organized labor Laborers, non-union
Most frequent some involvement	**Least frequent some involvement**
CEOs of small businesses Clerical Sales representatives Owners of small businesses	Laborers, non-union
Most frequent little involvement	**Least frequent little involvement**
Organized labor CEOs of large businesses Laborers, non-union	Supervisors Managers, VPs
Most frequent no involvement	**Least frequent no involvement**
Organized labor Laborers, non-union Farmers	Owners of small businesses Supervisors CEOs of small businesses

TYPES OF INDUSTRY

As the service industry emerged in Illinois, the community colleges, like other providers of training, began to gear up to bring new programs to the forefront. The health industry suffered a shortage of workers and depended to a great extent on the community colleges for training. Proprietary sources of workers were also available. The involvement of the representatives from the

health industry, as well as from workers in health occupations helped the educational system to respond quickly to the need. Other service industries have followed suit, as evidenced in Table 14.

Changes within the manufacturing industry, necessitated by increased technological advancements, have resulted in increased private-sector involvement to assist community colleges in adapting to the changes.

A review of the extent to which community colleges have representation from various industries within the area served by the college is shown on Table 14 below. Although some industries are overrepresented and others are underrepresented, very few are not represented at all. Forty-two percent are involved in proportion to the extent they exist in the district.

TABLE 14

REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRIES

Question:	Do private-sector representatives involved with your programs represent the industries in your geographical area in an appropriate ratio? Scale included: greater, about the same, less, not involved. 9% don't know/no response

RANK ORDER

GREATER

59% Health Services
31% Agriculture
31% Social Services, e.g., child care, family serv.
26% Manufacturing
21% Repair Services
15% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
15% Retail Trades
15% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
13% Gov't, incl. postal & military
10% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
8% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
5% Construction Trades

ABOUT THE SAME

59% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
51% Manufacturing
51% Social Services, child care, family serv.
44% Retail Trades
41% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
38% Repair Services
33% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
33% Gov't, incl. postal & military
31% Health Services
31% Construction Trades
26% Agriculture
21% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping

LESS

41% Construction Trades
33% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
31% Retail Trade
28% Repair Services
26% Hospitality, e.g. lodging, food
26% Gov't., incl. postal & military
26% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
18% Agriculture

NO INVOLVEMENT

23% Personal Services, e.g. barber, laundry, housekeeping
21% Hospitality Services, e.g. lodging, food
13% Gov't., incl. postal & military
13% Construction Trades
10% Agriculture
8% Transportation, Communication, Utilities
5% Repair Services
5% Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

(cont'd)

Table 14 (cont'd)

LESS		NO INVOLVEMENT	
15%	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	3%	Manufacturing
15%	Manufacturing	3%	Social Services, e.g. child care, family serv.
10%	Social Services, e.g. child care, family serv.	3%	Retail Trades
3%	Health Services	0%	Health Services

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ALL RESPONSES

23%	Greater	10%	No involvement
42%	About the same	9%	Don't know/no response
25%	Less		

Health is the only industry that is involved in all community college districts responding to the questionnaire. It is also overrepresented in its involvement in 59% of the districts. One reason for such excellent involvement from this industry may be that because many of the health occupations require licensing, the community colleges may be actively seeking this involvement to assure their programs meet requirements.

Community college programs having the greatest enrollment are in the field of business and marketing. The financial industry is involved about equal to or greater than its incidence in the industry by 74% of the community colleges. Private-sector involvement from retail trade is equal to or greater in 59% of the districts.

Fifty-six percent of the community colleges report less or no involvement from the private sector representing the personal services industry, and construction trades were under involved at 54% of the community colleges.

SIZE OF WORKPLACES HAVING REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Nearly half of all the private-sector involvement in occupational programs at the community colleges represents a workplace with less than 100 employees. Traditionally, vocational education graduates find employment in small firms which generally have no in-house training and must rely on workers who have acquired skills elsewhere. See Table 15 below.

TABLE 15

WORKPLACE SIZE

Question:	What size of workplace do people who become involved in your programs represent?

(cont'd)

Table 15 (cont'd)

Average Percent Involved	Workplace Size
26%	10-100 employees
23%	Under 10 employees
18%	250-500 employees
17%	Over 500 employees
16%	100-250 employees

EFFECT OF EFE ON PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Fifty-five percent of the community college deans believe EFE has increased partnerships between the private sector and vocational education. Forty-two percent believe partnerships have remained about the same. Only 3% believe EFE has caused a decrease in partnerships. See Table 16.

TABLE 16

EFFECT OF EFE ON PARTNERSHIPS

Question:	How has the Education for Employment Policy affected partnerships between the private sector and education?

	Community College
Increased significantly	5%
Increased some	50%
About the same	42%
Decreased some	3%
Decreased significantly	0%

OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTICIPATION

Private-sector involvement in vocational education, as well as public participation in programming occurs at both the state and the grassroots levels in a variety of ways. Direct involvement, as reported in the previous two sections, primarily focuses on program content, instruction, and equipment used to deliver occupational skills. It also focuses on program selection at the RDS and community college district levels. Both provide opportunities for concerns of business and labor organizations to be made known. This direct involvement is essential to vocational education if it is to be responsive to labor market needs.

Several other mechanisms are in place which also contribute to public participation and involvement of the private sector in making needs for quality vocational education known. These are highlighted briefly below.

ICoVE. The State Council provides ongoing dialogue with both state and local personnel. In addition to direct discussions with the State Board and their staff pertaining to labor market needs and the workforce needs as viewed by the private sector, ICoVE publishes a quarterly newsletter, NEWSLINE, with a circulation of over 10,000. NEWSLINE reaches the vocational education community, the private sector, special interest groups, and other government agencies and programs.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES. The State technical committees comprised of private-sector representatives provide input specific to curriculum being prepared for statewide distribution.

AD HOC/TASK FORCE. The State Board frequently convenes special ad hoc committees or task forces with private sector and special interest group representatives to provide input on special issues or concerns.

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUPS. Special projects funded by Perkins Act funds through the State Board have advisory committees to advise on the development of the project.

PUBLIC HEARINGS. The State Board conducts public hearings regarding the development of the State Plan. ICoVE apprises the State Board regarding input it received at ICoVE public hearings. (See Report 19.)

LMI. Labor market information is made available in Illinois through the Illinois Department of Employment Security. The IOICC works with IDES and other state agencies to provide LMI to the State Board, the RDSs and community college districts to meet their needs.

IJTCC. The State Board, RDS personnel, and community colleges participate with the IJTCC to provide input as it relates to the JTPA program needs.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS. Vocational education's partnership with the Bureau of Apprenticeship creates an ongoing system of input, at both the state and local level, for workforce needs in the various trades.

HITS. The quick start programs designed to meet the needs for workers in new and expanding industries exposes education to many changes which are on the cutting edge of industry.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. A large number of vocational education participants, particularly at the community colleges, are adults who are already in the workforce. As program participants who are returning to education for updating, upgrading, or retraining, these students provide feedback about "the real world of work" directly to program instructors and other students.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS. The Illinois State Board of Education involves community-based organizations in the delivery of vocational education. ISBE works with CBOs to determine their needs and identify ways of working together. Several CBOs receive special project grants to assist the State Board in developing programs and materials. A total of 28 CBOs were involved during FY 88.

COMMENDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Several segments of the Education for Employment community in Illinois provide special recognition for exemplary private-sector involvement making a contribution to Education for Employment. Not only do these actions provide deserving appreciation, they also help to make others aware of the involvement.

Most regional delivery systems and community college districts provide some form of "employer appreciation." Recognition is given to advisory council members, VIP sponsors, employers of vocational education students, technical committee members, and those who work with the vocational education student organizations.

The Illinois Vocational Association gives special recognition for outstanding contributions of the private sector as part of its recognition program.

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education sponsors an exemplary private-sector recognition program as part of a national recognition program sponsored by the National Council on Vocational Education.

SALUTE is a statewide recognition program sponsored jointly by the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Vocational Association, the Illinois Council on Vocational Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. SALUTE honors one outstanding private-sector representative from each RDS and each community college district at a one-day conference. Each recipient is given a plaque in appreciation of his/her efforts. From this group, ICoVE selects one representative for national recognition awarded by the National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education, the National Council on Vocational Education, the National Alliance of Business and the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education.

Private-sector representatives serving on State Technical Committees are presented certificates of appreciation by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education and the Illinois State Board of Education.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR – VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

In its efforts to help communicate private-sector needs to the vocational education community, the Illinois Council seeks information prepared by a variety of groups and organizations denoting the value of partnerships or succinctly describing the needs and benefits of both partners in the partnership. This section summarizes two national reports which ICoVE believes are excellent.

Most of the content of this section is excerpted or highlighted from these two reports which ICoVE endorses as a result of its assessment and ongoing oversight of partnerships in Illinois. The focus of the reports is not narrowed to vocational education. ICoVE concurs with the implication of this breadth, i.e. that the issue is more far-reaching than vocational education. The information will be of significant value to vocational educators as they continue to "champion the cause" of private sector – vocational education partnerships.

ICoVE encourages all who are interested or concerned about the well-being of Illinois' educational system to read the documents in their entirety. The documents include: (see Resources for address information)

WORKPLACE BASICS: THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT (a joint research effort of The American Society for Training and Development and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.)

BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE (a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Commerce.)

The two documents represent collaborative efforts at the national level to define the roles of education and the private sector, explain the needs for partnerships, describe events leading to what appears to be drastic changes in how work is done and what education must produce, delineate the impact on our nation's well-being, and clarify the influence and impacting capacity of each on the other.

CHANGES IMPACTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Much has been said about the necessity of a productive workforce in a competitive world market. Dialogue about role responsibilities between education and the private sector has been plentiful, often asking, "Why should the private sector get involved in education's problems?"

In its introduction, *WORKPLACE BASICS: THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT* describes the impact of changing workplace basics on the private sector. These changes need to be fully understood if education is to respond and prepare students with the "new" workplace basics. Excerpts from the Introduction are presented below to illustrate the impact of occurring changes.

- *New technology. Participative management. Sophisticated statistical quality controls. Customer service. Just-in-time production. The workplace is changing and so are the skills that employees must have in order to change with it.*

- *While not a new problem, deficiencies in basic workplace skills is a growing one. It is a challenge emerging from a volatile mix of demographic, economic and technical forces. These combined forces are driving the nation toward a human capital deficit among both new and experienced workers that threatens the competitiveness of economic institutions and acts as a barrier to the individual opportunity of all Americans.*

- *The nation is facing a startling demographic reality that isn't likely to go away. The group of 16-to-24 year olds that is the traditional source of new workers is shrinking, and employers will have to reach into the ranks of the less qualified to get their entry-level workforce. That means that an increasing number of entry-level workers will come from groups where historically human resource investments have been deficient.*

- *Ironically, this demographic reality is on a collision course with the notion that employees must be able to quickly understand and acquire new and different skills. As technology becomes more footloose and instantaneously available worldwide, the skills of employees become the employer's competitive edge.*

- *Employer interest in improving basic skills is driven by economic concerns. When deficiencies affect the bottom line, employers respond with training or replacement. But, the time-honored choice, replacement, is becoming less practical because the supply of workers is shrinking. Increasingly, employers are forced to make rather than buy productive employees. As a result, interest in providing training in basic workplace skills is growing.*

- *Employee interest also is growing, primarily because workers are being challenged as never before. For those already employed, deficiencies in basic workplace skills threaten adaptation, and short-circuit successful job*

transitions, and career growth. The ground under them is shifting as the range of skills needed to participate successfully in this economy expands. They are less supervised, but more frequently called upon to identify problems and make crucial decisions.

- *Perhaps the most devastating impact of basic workplace deficiencies falls upon the disadvantaged who are outside the economic mainstream, struggling to get in.*

- *The upskilling of work in America is driven by technical changes, innovation, and a sense of heightened competition. The picture is further complicated by competitive challenges driving companies toward employing an array of strategies that require adaptive and innovative workers with strong interpersonal skills. Business strategies such as collaboration (the work team concept), exemplary customer service, and emphasis on quality demand teamwork, listening skills, the ability to set goals, creativity, and problem-solving skills.*

- *Couple this with the movement toward more participative management and employers aggressively driving workers toward decision-making at the point of production or point of sale, and it is easy to see that new skills must be applied if employees and their employers are to succeed in the marketplace.*

- *In fact, one might even say that a new kind of American worker is being ordered up. And this new worker will be expected to have a broad set of skills that were previously required only of supervisors and management.*

WORKPLACE BASICS cites an example of how competition and advancing technology is changing the skills needed in many occupations:

One job already in transition is that of bank teller. Competitive shifts and new technologies have had a profound effect on the structure, organization, and management of banks. A new customer service philosophy demands that traditional institutional and professional specialties give way to a "one stop shopping" approach for financial services.

Traditionally a processor, the bank teller's primary role was to perform a series of repetitive tasks (checks in, money out, reconciling) very well. Competitive pressures to satisfy customers' "one stop" desires have expanded the bank teller's role to include advising customers on a wide range of customized financial services. The teller now is privy to an array of information previously in the domain of mid level managers, is empowered to advise

customers, and is charged with making judgment calls "on the line" that is, at the point of customer contact. Moreover, the teller is linked with data via a computer terminal, requiring a new range of skills to operate the equipment and access relevant data speedily.

In short, to be effective in the workplace the new bank teller may not need to have the same degree of skills in a narrow area of expertise, but instead must have a good knowledge of a wide ***range*** *of skills.*

The U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce in *BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE* highlight several summary points of their findings. Summary points from the section of the report titled, The Change Economy - The Changing Workplace, further describe the impact of changes:

- ***The economy and the workplace are changing rapidly, and the pace of change is accelerating*** *... the pace of technology development, shorter product life cycles, and new flexible production processes all require more adaptable, more highly educated entry workers in order for our country to remain competitive.*

- ***The jobs themselves are changing in content and skill requirements, regardless of type or size of business.*** *. . . more than half of all new jobs created between 1984-2000 will require some education beyond high school, and almost a third will be filled by college graduates. Today, only 22 percent of all occupations require a college degree. . . .*

  The accelerating pace of change has enormous implications for the workplaces of the future and for our entry level workers. It is clear that labor market developments over the remainder of this century will demand a flexible and adaptable workforce, able to shift rapidly. . . .

- ***The large majority of employers consulted contend that the complex and changing marketplace will continually heighten the need for a more highly qualified entry level labor force.*** *. . . future workers will be required to work within more complicated work environments while performing multiple and more intricate tasks.*

PRIVATE SECTOR'S CONCERNS ABOUT EDUCATION

The private sector's concerns about education and the skills gap were summarized in *BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE*. The concerns, as stated in the report, include seven areas.

- *The basic skills gap between what business needs, and the qualifications of the entry level workers available to business, is widening.*

- *Two-thirds of employers consulted assessed the current pool of entry level applicants as being insufficiently prepared in basic skills.*

- *Employers are practically unanimous in their concern that competencies of entry level workers are deficient.*

- *An overwhelming majority of the business representatives consulted indicated entry level workers should read at least at the eighth grade level.*

- *Nearly all business representatives stressed the importance of communication skills.*

- *Business also expressed concerns about workers with deficiencies in basic workplace abilities.*

- *Nine out of ten employers consulted indicated that entry level positions require a solid basic mathematical foundation.*

WORKPLACE NEEDS EXPRESSED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Communication skills have not only been identified as a required workplace basic skill, but also as a required element of private sector - educational partnerships. During the past five years, the private sector has been trying to communicate to the educational system what "new workforce skills" are needed. The educational system tried to respond, but the problem still remained. Efforts on both parts continued. Both parties communicated and both parties listened. The problem? Two different languages. It has taken a great deal of effort on both parts, but the language barrier appears to be dwindling. The private sector and the educational communities are increasing their understanding of what the other is trying to say.

Resulting from research conducted by a study of the American Society of Training and Development and the U.S. Department of Labor, thirteen basic skills were identified as being skills employers say they want in addition to the standard academic skills. These basic skills were grouped and presented in *WORKPLACE BASICS: THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT* as "the Seven Skill Groups Employers Want."

- ***THE FOUNDATION:*** *Know How to Learn*

  - ***Learning to learn*** *- the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to learn effectively, no matter what the learning situation.*

- ***COMPETENCE:*** *Reading, Writing, and Communication*

- ***COMMUNICATION:*** *Listening and Oral Communication*

  - ***Listening*** *- the ability to heed the key points of customers', suppliers', and co-workers' concerns.*
  - ***Oral communications*** *- the ability to convey an adequate response to those concerns.*

- ***ADAPTABILITY:*** *Creative Thinking and Problem Solving*

  - ***Problem-solving*** *- the ability to think on one's feet;*
  - ***Creative thinking*** *- the ability to come up with innovative solutions.*

- ***PERSONAL MANAGEMENT:*** *Self-Esteem, Goal Setting/ Motivation, and Personal Career Development*

  - ***Self-esteem*** *- the ability to have pride in one's self and believe in one's potential to be successful.*
  - ***Goal-setting/motivation*** *- the ability to know how to get things done.*
  - ***Personal and career development skills*** *- the awareness of the skills needed to perform well in the workplace.*

- ***GROUP EFFECTIVENESS:*** *Interpersonal Skills, Negotiation, Teamwork*

  - ***Interpersonal skills*** *- the ability to get along with customers, suppliers, and co-workers.*
  - ***Teamwork*** *- the ability to work with others to achieve a goal.*
  - ***Negotiation*** *- the ability to build consensus through give and take.*

- ***INFLUENCE:*** *Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership*

  - ***Organizational effectiveness*** *- the understanding of where the organization is headed, and how one can make a contribution.*
  - ***Leadership*** *- the ability to assume responsibility and motivate co-workers when necessary.*

The U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce identified sixteen items that the private-sector workplace needs. These are listed in *BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE.*

Entry Level Workers and Applicants:

- *Read and comprehend policy and instruction manuals as well as technical material.*

- *Write sentences with correct sentence form, spelling, punctuation, and other matters of mechanics.*
- *Perceive errors and rewrite.*
- *Speak and explain ideas clearly.*
- *Answer and ask questions and follow verbal directions.*
- *Add, subtract, multiply and divide.*
- *Work with fractions and decimals.*

Technical Skills:

- *Measure and comprehend spatial relationships, and use metric measurements.*
- *Type with accuracy and speed.*
- *Work accurately with computers and computerized programs.*

Positive Attitudes and Ability

- *Learn, be flexible, and respond to change quickly.*
- *Deal with complexity, that is, learn and perform multiple tasks and analyze and deal with a wide variety of options.*
- *Identify problems, perceive alternative approaches, and select the best approach.*
- *Operate independently after a brief but intensive orientation period or after an initial training period.*
- *Work cooperatively with people of different personalities, race, sex, across different authority levels and organizational divisions.*
- *Be punctual and dependable as well as show pride and enthusiasm in performing well.*

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

WORKPLACE BASICS: THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT outlines a "Blueprint for Success" in developing industry-based programs for workplace basics. Although the blueprint was developed for private-sector use, it provides a model for educational programs to follow in their efforts to be responsive to needs of the workforce. Most of the steps are similar to steps being used in Illinois to revitalize curriculum. It would be particularly useful in joint program development efforts of education and the private sector. The step by step process includes the following items.

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS[1]

Step I: ***Identify Job Changes or Problems Related to Basic Workplace Skills***

- *Assess the extent of the need for training due to job changes or problems*
- *Form a company wide representative advisory committee*
- *Perform a job analysis for selected jobs*

- Document employee performance deficiencies on the selected jobs
- Identify target population for training
- Build cooperation with unions

Step II: **Build Management and Union Support to Develop and Implement Training Programs in Workplace Basics**
- Make the case for skills training programs in workplace basics
- Build support for skills training programs in workplace basics

Step III: **Present Strategy Plan to Management and Unions for Approval**
- Present the strategy plan for training
- Select a training program architech: In-house staff vs. external providers

Step IV: **Perform a Task Analysis of Each Selected Job or Job Family**
- Perform a task analysis
- Determine whether to select a quick route through task analysis, and which process is most appropriate
- Review the generic elements of the task analysis processes

Step V: **Design the Curriculum**
- Design performance based, functional context instructional program
- Design evaluation system
- Design documentation and record keeping system
- Obtain final budget approval to implement program

Step VI: **Develop the Curriculum**
- Prepare the instructional format
- Select instructional techniques
- Select training site and designate equipment requirements
- Develop evaluation and monitoring instruments

Step VII: **Implement the Training Program**
- Select and train the instructional staff
- Develop a training contract- yes or no?
- Pilot test (optional)

Step VIII: **Evaluate and Monitor the Training Program**
- Carry out initial evaluation
- Begin on going program monitoring
- Connect back to management

[1] As printed in Training and Development Journal, October 1988.

Suggestions for strengthening the educational system as cited in *BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE* included five major points:

- ***Increase accountability.*** *Just as business must set and meet high standards for the quality of its products, so must the schools through rigorous performance standards. Also, as business has decentralized authority and responsibility, schools must move toward school-based management and accountability.*

- ***Strengthen the content of the curriculum and improve its delivery.*** *Schools must concentrate on excellence in the basic skills to ensure that young people have the foundation they need for lifelong learning and adapting to change. Just as business has had to adapt its methods and technology from mass production to more flexible production to remain competitive, schools must also ensure that their teaching methods will address students' individualized needs and prepare all young people to be competent and responsible workers and citizens. Schools must find ways to make the basics relate better to the workplace.*

- ***Recruit and reward good teachers and principals.*** *Just as business must be highly competitive in recruiting and retaining quality workers, so must the schools, through creative recruitment and retention efforts, performance based pay plans, and other incentives.*

- ***Improve educational opportunities and performance of the disadvantaged.*** *There is a direct link between a quality education and a quality workforce. Therefore, business and education must develop partnerships which invest in human capital just as business invests in plants and equipment. Special efforts are needed to target partnerships to assist the severely "at risk" including dropouts and the dropout-prone, and to intervene earlier. Demographics already tell us that a much greater proportion of future labor force entrants will be women, blacks, Hispanics, and immigrants. Only 15 percent of the new entrants to the labor force during the balance of this century will be white males.*

- ***Increase competitiveness.*** *Just as individual businesses must respond to the market with increased flexibility and increased ability to identify and seize their market niche, so must the schools, through parent and student choice. Just as business must be concerned with image, perceptions, marketing and packaging their products, so must the schools ensure that their communities are well-informed about their performance and their results.*

Suggestions for expanding the private sector's involvement with education which were cited in ***BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE***, suggest actions nearly identical to actions recommended by ICoVE in its Report 3, Advice to the Private Sector. The four suggestions given by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce include the following:

> *Business must articulate its human resource needs with greater specificity and precision, to help educators meet the current and future needs of employers. Business should expand its involvement and investment in our education system beyond symbolic efforts in ways that improve educational effectiveness and efficiency. Business should participate actively in policy, educational improvement, and management activities.*

- ***Take the initiative to broaden the base of political support/advocacy for the schools.*** *Only a small proportion of our cities' families have school age children. Schools need the involvement and critical assessment of the entire community .... Business has leverage to improve the quality of education, by serving on school boards, either elected or appointed, or on advisory councils to Superintendents and principals, or working with elected officials, unions, and other community institutions such as universities and community colleges. If business makes the case that the community's economic and employment future is at stake, communities will listen.*

- ***Develop community-wide collaborative efforts that increase communication and decrease the isolation of the education and the business communities.*** *This can be accomplished by bringing education to business (i.e., providing basic skills training in the workplace, or providing teachers opportunities to work in business settings). This can also be accomplished by bringing a clearer sense of workforce expectations into the schools (vitalizing the schools through awareness that good jobs demand literacy and other basic competencies, and through expansion of initiatives to enrich the curricula young people are taught). Business can help in fostering successful transitions to work and to higher education.*

- ***Undertake initiatives that assist schools in good management practices.*** *Promote decentralization and autonomy (school based management), accountability and performance standards, professional training and development, merit pay, application of new technology, and other activities which successful businesses must employ if they are to remain competitive.*

- Work to improve business' labor force planning for the short- and long-term, both to enable firms to attract, select, and retain a quality labor force, and to provide guidance to the schools. Business needs to become more intelligent buyers, users, and developers of their labor pool to improve their own and the nation's productivity and ability to compete.

CONCLUSIONS

- Private-sector participation with the Education for Employment community can benefit not only vocational education, but also the private sector.

- Education for Employment needs input from the private sector if it is to be responsive to the needs of business and labor.

- Education for Employment most frequently involves the private sector in activities which are striving to provide opportunities for faculty to update their work skills, verify occupational task lists, provide work sites for students, and advise programs through advisory councils.

- The Education for Employment community is least likely to enlist the help of the private sector in addressing the needs of target populations, promoting vocational education to local boards of control, and seeking business foundations or other equipment/fund raising activities.

- By and large, Education for Employment administrators believe that the contribution the private sector makes in helping vocational education achieve desired outcomes is directly related to its extent of involvement.

- The Education for Employment community sees the private sector as having the most difficulty in helping it to address the needs of target populations and in addressing statewide education and training needs.

- EFE administrators believe the greatest barriers to private-sector involvement stems from the private sector's being unaware of how they could help and why their involvement is needed.

- The EFE and education as a whole do not communicate well with the private sector.

- Insufficient staff time to work with the private sector is a barrier to private-sector involvement, which is nearly equal to the lack of awareness by the private sector.

- Vocational education administrators encounter very few private-sector people who lack interest in vocational education.

- Prior partnership experiences which were not favorable or beneficial cause some private-sector representatives to not get involved with EFE.

- Private sector involvement in the RDS and community college systems has been substantial in the last few years. Much of the involvement has been more task specific than of an ongoing nature.

- Information pertaining to follow up and follow through activities involving the private sector is not available.

- Secondary administrators do not view their faculty as being as hesitant to work with the private sector as the community college deans view theirs.

- Supervisors, managers or vice presidents, and small business owners are the most frequently involved representatives of the private sector.

- Labor, whether organized or non union, is the least involved segment of the private sector.

- Service workers and non professional workers are less likely to be involved with vocational education than are the supervisory, technical, managerial, and professional workers.

- Involvement in vocational education by representatives of the private sector fairly well mirrors the hierarchy of the workforce.

- The types of industries involved with vocational education programs represent the industries of the geographic area in the delivery system fairly well. Further, the representation aligns fairly well with the programs being offered.

- Some industries not represented or poorly represented may not have adequate input in terms of making their needs known. These are typically industries characterized by low wage and low skilled workers.

- Most private sector representatives involved with Education for Employment come from a workplace having 100 or less employees.

- The EFE Policy has had a greater influence on the private sector involvement in the RDS than at the community colleges.

- Overall, private sector involvement in the RDS and community college system is active and successful. Some individual RDSs and community colleges have very little private sector involvement and are experiencing very little success.

- The percentage of RDS directors who indicated they were not knowledgeable about various aspects of private sector involvement in the RDS is of concern.

- There seems to be very little structure to private-sector involvement in either the RDS or community college system.

- Private-sector involvement appears to be administrator-managed if it is required by the State Board, but "voluntary" otherwise. If local personnel believe that private-sector involvement has merit, a great deal emerges. If not, it does not exist. At the program level, private-sector involvement appears to be fairly dependent upon the teacher or instructor.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education recommends that the Illinois State Board of Education should enhance Education for Employment Partnerships with the private sector by the following:

- Require and monitor increased involvement of the private sector at all levels of Education for Employment, including programming, progam content, delivery, job placement, and communication with the public, i.e. involve teachers/instructors, guidance counselors, administrators/deans, boards of control.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education suggests the following actions to improve the extent to which the private sector's views and concerns are incorporated into Education for Employment.

- Target technical assistance to RDSs and community colleges having limited involvement and success with the private sector.
- Communicate vocational education's need for private-sector input.
- Design strategies to provide faculty greater opportunities for direct involvement with the private sector.
- Develop suggestions for involving various segments of the private sector with vocational education.
- Request involvement of labor when partnerships are formed at the corporate level.
- Work directly with labor, particularly organized labor, to plan private-sector involvement with vocational education.
- Provide feedback to the private sector regarding the use of their input.
- Involve the private sector in designing ways to identify program results and outcomes.

- Use materials such as WORKPLACE BASICS: SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT and BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE to identify skills needed in the workplace. Incorporate these into curricula.

RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Labor. U.S. Department of Education. U.S. Department of Commerce. ***Building A Quality Workforce.*** Washington, DC. July 1988.

American Society of Training and Development. U. S. Department of Employment and Training Administration. ***Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want.*** U.S. Government Printing Office. Alexandria, VA. 1988.

-----***Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want Training and Development Journal.*** U. S. Government Printing Office. Alexandria, VA. 1988.

Addresses

Building A Quality Workforce

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Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want

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